

which four of the members of the committee concurred. The report provided that the General Assembly should submit to the voters of the State a proposition relative to the call of a convention every ten years. If the majority of the voters so determined the convention was to meet at its earliest convenience.<sup>59</sup> Mr. Brent, of Baltimore City, offered a substitute for the above report, by making it obligatory on the governor of the State to issue a proclamation every ten years for the taking of the vote of the people in reference to a convention.<sup>60</sup> The difference between Mr. Brent's proposition and the majority of the committee's report was that the former guaranteed independence of the legislature, while the other left to the legislature the right of authorizing the vote to be taken on the question of a convention.

Mr. Sollers said that he did not know how rapid were the strides of Baltimore City in the cause of abolition; but he knew the insecurity of slave property in southern Maryland. Slave property was insecure just in proportion as the counties surrendered their control over the government of the State. He was not willing to trust the maintenance of slavery under a constitutional provision which would enable the majority of the voters to call a convention.<sup>61</sup>

Mr. Jenifer, of Charles county, in a speech before the convention on the 29th of January, 1851, referring to the article in the constitution prohibiting the legislature from passing any law affecting the relation of master and slave as then existing in the State, said: That article was intended to put to rest the fanaticism as regards slavery in Maryland, and would do so, so long as the constitution and laws were respected. But if the right of a bare majority was recognized to abolish the existing system of government, and establish a new one, that provision was no guar-

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>60</sup> *Debates*, vol. ii, p. 360.

<sup>61</sup> *Debates*, vol. ii, p. 364.